

Testimony of

**Angela Renfree**

**Groton Educator**

Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

8 years ago I decided to go back to school and completed what I started 20+ years ago. I received my masters in early education. At the time I was hired school was “normal “. A few months in coronavirus hit. The normal turned into working from home, zooming with our students and staff and recording ourselves teaching lessons. To be honest, I have never worked harder than I did during this time. Myself and my team put in 10 to 12 hours a day. We would zoom with our students 3 times a day for 45 to 60 minutes each day, then in between classes check their work and give meaningful feedback. This was being done until sometimes 9:00 pm because some students didn’t have the ability to work earlier due to parents work schedules. Any free time I had I was recording myself, trying to make the best lessons, lessons all students could follow and understand. Many times I had to re-record because my words weren’t clear. It was a lot of work and a lot of time I will not get back. If you called every one of my families at that time, I’m positive they would tell you that I went above and beyond to teach their child during the pandemic. Now that we are somewhat back to normal, teaching has changed. I just can’t go to work and plan my day and teach what I want. The first thing I have to do is prove to my students they can trust me and they are safe in my care. The very first thing I do with all my students daily is check in with them as soon as they come walking through my door. I have found this to first take some time but it’s necessary, it’s helped me create relationships with each and every student where they feel comfortable telling me why they came in crying or angry. Sometimes I find myself with one student who is crying, then screaming and pulling his hair at the same time. I am able to calm him down because I’ve worked hard creating that trust.

Once this trusting bond, relationship is formed, then students start coming more and more to me for some sort of help. Once all this is done in the end I have time to teach. Teachers have multiple jobs, when I went into teaching, it wasn't like this. This job is hard, it's tough, both emotionally and physically. I'm a really great teacher and I go above and beyond for all my students. My parents and students enjoy me and appreciate me. My principal is amazed that I'm not tenured yet and wants me to move to the upper grades. Administration is always complimenting my teaching, how I have a solid routine and schedule. With times being the way they are, I've had to pick up a 2nd job. We have 2 kids going through college. Cost of living has gone up so much but our salaries are not changing with the times. If we were paid what we were worth, more people would want to teach and the teachers now wouldn't be so quick to find out about early retirement. Burn out is happening quick, pay us what we deserve and I'm positive more people will choose teaching as their profession.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

